

Charles Bolden, NASA Administrator
ASCAN Class of 2013 Application Event

NASA Headquarters

November 15, 2011

- Good afternoon. Welcome everyone. Welcome to the future of NASA.
- These are exciting times at NASA and this is an especially exciting day. I hope you all enjoyed the video. It really conveys the vision and vitality with which we are taking the next big leap in human space flight.
- For 50 years, American astronauts have led the exploration of our solar system and expanded our knowledge about what it takes to live and work in space.
- Today, you are going to get a glimpse of why that will remain true for the next half-century.

- You will not only get to meet members of NASA's latest class of astronauts, you will also learn how you can join their ranks, as we begin recruitment for the Class of 2013.
- In a few minutes, you will learn more about the recruitment process from NASA's Director of Flight Crew Operations, Janet Kavandi; one of our newest astronauts, Serena Aunon; and NASA's Chief Human Capital Officer and Assistant Administrator for Human Capital Management Jeri Buchholz. Let me say how pleased I am that we are partnering with the Office of Personnel Management for the first time in our astronaut recruitment.
- The presence of all of you... the presence of our newest astronauts and the fact that interest in becoming an astronaut remains extremely high makes it clear: human space flight is alive and well at NASA.

- We are extremely proud of the trailblazing accomplishments of our Shuttle astronauts over the past 30 years, but with the end of the Shuttle program, we are now setting our sights on and even more distant horizons.
- We are once again ready to go where no man or woman has gone before.
- Under the direction of President Obama and the Congress, NASA is now embarking on an exciting journey into deep space and developing a Space Launch System that will be capable of transporting astronauts and cargo to Mars, asteroids, and other places well beyond low Earth orbit.
- As a result, we are beginning to transition transport to and from the International Space Station to America's commercial space sector rather than continuing to rely solely on the Russians.

- Some of the astronauts here with us today, graduates of the 2009 class, will be the first Americans to travel to the International Space Station aboard U.S. commercial spacecraft. Some of the astronauts we're recruiting today will be pioneers in our missions to make the first footprints on the surface of Mars.
- Thanks to our excellent Flight Crew Operations team down in Houston, I am confident our astronauts will continue to bring the right stuff, the right skills, and the right mindset needed to pursue this new course.
- Let me also say that as we enter this new era of commercial space flight, there will be even more opportunities for those of you who want to fly. Several of our commercial partners are doing their own astronaut recruitment.

- Some of our veterans of human space flight have taken key roles at our commercial partners, and their expertise will be invaluable as we fly the next generation on these new and innovative systems.
- Finally, let me say to the students and the educators out there, you are the keys to NASA's future.
- As I told the 2009 astronaut class at their graduation event on November 4th, in addition to their technical expertise and their special training for long duration missions, their education and backgrounds in science, technology, engineering, and math, make them uniquely qualified to maximize the potential of the International Space Station in the coming years.

- As NASA Administrator, one of my greatest challenges and passions is to lead our NASA team in inspiring the next generation of Americans to once again become interested in STEM disciplines.
- For me, space exploration and education go hand in hand.
- After all, that's what space exploration is all about – expanding our knowledge of the solar system and our relationship to it so that we can make life better here on Earth.
- So, to all the would-be future astronauts out there, I say, the first step begins with education, especially in the STEM disciplines.
- And to the teachers with an interest in space flight, I say there may be a place for you as a NASA astronaut. We are actively encouraging K-12 teachers to apply.

- We know that the experience will not only expand your knowledge of the cosmos, it will be something you can bring back to the classroom to educate and excite your students.
- Whenever I have the chance to welcome new astronauts, I think about my own most unlikely journey from the segregated schools and neighborhoods of Columbia, South Carolina to NASA and the Astronaut Office.
- I flew four times into space – twice as a Shuttle commander and twice as pilot.
- While every mission has had its own set of challenges and discoveries, what stands out the most to me is the incredible view of our home planet, Earth, from outer space.
- As our new astronauts will one day see for themselves, from orbit, the borders of the world below aren't visible, unless created by Mother Nature.
- We all as a crew, as a team, worked together toward common goals.

- That is what we do at NASA. That's what our astronauts do.
No matter their race...gender, cultural perspective, or background, they all sign up for a common purpose and vision – “to reach new heights and reveal the unknown so that what we do and learn will benefit all humankind”.
- At NASA that is our vision and this is your moment to join us!
- Now I would like to turn the podium over to my good friend, the Director of NASA's Flight Crew Operations, Dr. Janet Kavandi...